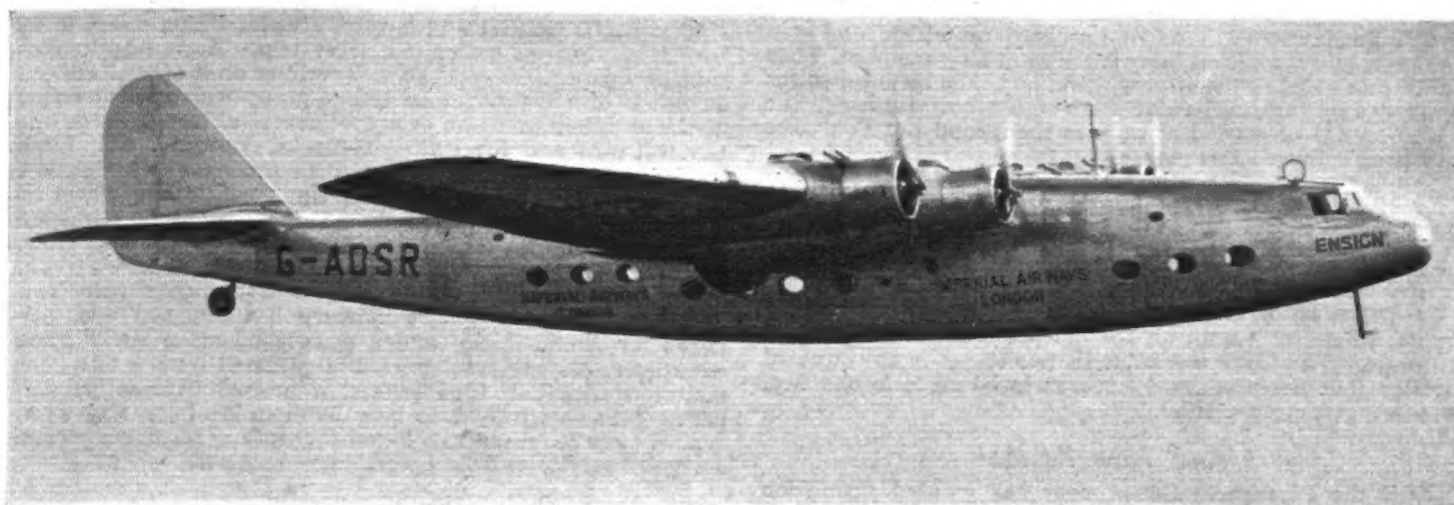


COMMERCIAL AVIATION



"Flight" photograph.

READY: Imperial Airways should very shortly be taking delivery of the first of the fourteen A.W. Ensigns, which appear to be well up on contracted performance and payload. This is a photograph of the first of the series taken on an early test flight.

THE WEEK AT CROYDON

"TarMac" Temporarily Takes Over and Writes About QBI and Control Officers' Salaries, Excavations, Air Raids and Other Things

AROUND this time of year "A. Viator" drops his pen, and with Ella Viator and their son D. Viator ballasting the family chariot, he sets out on vacation. I say "sets out" because he, probably no more than I, has no ghost of a notion as to their ultimate destination, except that their *Volkswagen* is headed west, and, like so many other airport conveyances, it probably knows the road Devonwards by heart.

I read in *Flight* last week that a gent.—or so one must assume, since the correspondence is over the pseudonym of "Operator"—has at last been so bold (following editorial comment of the previous week) as to instance some of the strange goings-on that have lately been noticed under QBI conditions. Of late many have ceased, as they used, to revere the letters QBI because, alas! they do not always appear when such conditions prevail. Sometimes, after setting out on a compass course for the foot of the control tower, and colliding with all and sundry, an engineer is surprised to find that this delightfully artistic sign is not illuminated. More often than not we learn that "Met" say, in accordance with their report of an hour ago, that conditions of poor visibility *cannot* prevail and so there's an end to it. Seems a pity that "Operator" chose to remain anonymous, but possibly he thought that those in Control might in future bear him a grudge, whereas in point of fact any airline pilot will tell you that the British control system is the most unbiased extant.

Definition Wanted

The point is that we *must* get down to the question: "What *are* QBI conditions?" At the moment there is too much variation of opinion on this important matter. One thing is certain, QBI is always going to mean inconvenience for *someone*, and it would seem imperative that operators, pilots, control officers, and others directly concerned, should get together with a view to arriving at greater unanimity on the matter.

Arguments put forward to suggest that the Controlled Zone scheme is faulty are that the actual area concerned is too large; that nothing will deter pilots, commercial and more especially private, from having a crack at entering QBI areas without permission until a system of fines can be instituted—and payable on the spot; that the present qualifications for the highly responsible and

specialised post of control officers are inadequate; and, lastly, that if the really experienced type of man is to be attracted to the control service, then the present salaries offered to candidates, as pointed out by *Flight* in its comment, are far from adequate.

Expressing my purely personal opinion, I think that the last-named argument more nearly reaches the root of the present unsatisfactory position. Very QBI, no doubt, but one hopes that officialdom will not frown upon the idea of control officers giving their views on this interesting subject in the appropriate pages of *Flight*.

Secret Service

Our excavations proceed apace and the levelling or gradation of our slope in front of the northern hangars must be a source of astonishment to Quirks and Guildings, who, of course, are only used to pick-and-shovel progress. We are assured that appropriate drainage facilities are being incorporated in this scheme; failure in this respect can but result in a call for amphibians with which to operate the winter newspaper services. However, the added space will be welcome, particularly if many more Service aircraft find their way to Croydon's "secret aircraft factory." Since "A. Viator's" recent discovery, the employees of this organisation are to be seen walking *backwards*, and when I passed the time of day with Rollingpin, the boss of this outfit, he said he's been having a lot of trouble with his car—a luxurious limousine, of course—as it has lately persisted in travelling in *reverse*. Drat that barbed wire!

Still we sing without our orchestra. I mean that unless I am very misinformed, we are still without our A.R.P.s at Croydon. True, unlike "A. Viator" who, I gather, is now an A.R.P. Professor, I have not pressed any enquiries as to how long after the declaration of hostilities (if any) we at Croydon are supposed to apply for our masks, but a visitor to Macadam Mansion in my remote village called with samples, tape and particulars to safeguard Mrs. TarMac and the hound against any Bad Smells likely to be thrust upon us. Of course I only hope our kind enemies give me time to travel the dozen odd miles home to fetch this useful little device in order that I may return to see what sort of a mess has been made of our airport, have a drink in the buffet and collect the possibly empty cash box.

TARMAC.